

Message Text

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SUBJECT: DECISIONS AT FEB 6 CABINET MEETING

SUMMARY: PRINCIPAL DECISIONS AT FEB 6 CABINET MEETING

INCLUDED (A) ANNOUNCEMENT OF A NEW DECREE-LAW REPEALING
PRINCIPAL PORTIONS OF 1975 ANTI-TERRORISM DECREE-LAW,
AND (B) ANNOUNCEMENT THAT A DRAFT LAW ESTABLISHING
THE RIGHT OF ASSEMBLY IS BEING SENT TO THE CORTES.
ADDITIONALLY, GOVT HAS ANNOUNCED TWO INTERESTING
PERSONNEL CHANGES, I.E., THE REASSIGNMENT OF ONE OF
THE KING'S ADVISERS, AND THE APPOINTMENT OF A NEW MFA
DIRECTOR OF NORTH AMERICAN AFFAIRS. END SUMMARY.

1. FOLLOWING FEB 6 CABINET MEETING, GOVT ANNOUNCED ONE
OF PRINCIPAL DECISIONS WAS APPROVAL OF A NEW DECREE-LAW
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REVISING ANTI-TERRORISM DECREE-LAW OF AUGUST 1975. NEW

DECREE-LAW, ACCORDING JUSTICE MINISTER GARRIGUES AT PRESS CONFERENCE AFTER CABINET MEETING, WILL REVOKE 14 ARTICLES OF 1975 DECREE-LAW, AND WILL HAVE EFFECT OF RETURNING MOST TERRORIST CASES IN FIRST INSTANCE TO CIVIL INSTEAD OF MILITARY JURISDICTION AS WELL AS OF ABOLISHING SPECIAL SUMMARY PROCEDURES AND OF ELIMINATING MANDATORY DEATH SENTENCES IN VARIOUS TERRORISM CASES UNDER 1975 DECREE-LAW. GARRIGUES STRESSED THAT NEW DECREE-LAW WAS PART OF REFORM PROGRAM ANNOUNCED BY ARIAS IN LATTER'S JAN 28 CORTES SPEECH, THAT IT HAD BEEN ELABORATED IN FORM OF DECREE-LAW NOT IN ORDER TO BYPASS CORTES BUT ONLY BECAUSE IT WAS PARTIALLY REPEALING AN EXISTING DECREE-LAW, AND THAT SPANISH PEOPLE WOULD STILL BE GIVEN ADEQUATE JUDICIAL PROTECTION AGAINST TERRORISM BY MEANS OF BOTH PENAL CODE AND CODE OF MILITARY JUSTICE.

2. AT SAME POST-CABINET PRESS CONFERENCE, INFORMATION MINISTER MARTIN GAMERO ALSO ANNOUNCED THE GOVT HAD DECIDED AT CABINET MEETING TO SEND TO CORTES A DRAFT LAW GRANTING THE RIGHT OF ASSEMBLY, ALSO AS PART OF PRESIDENT ARIAS' POLITICAL PROGRAM, ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT ENTER INTO ANY DETAILS.

3. LASTLY, TWO NEW GOVT APPOINTMENTS APPROVED AT CABINET MEETING ARE OF MORE THAN PASSING INTEREST. FIRST IS APPOINTMENT OF JOSE JOAQUIN PUIG DE LA BELLACASA, A CAREER SPANISH DIPLOMAT WHO FOR THE LAST TWO YEARS HAS BEEN SERVING JUAN CARLOS IN LATTER'S SECRETARIAT, TO POST OF DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR INTERNATIONAL TECHNICAL COOPERATION AT MFA. PUIG'S APPOINTMENT IS NOT AS SIGNIFICANT FOR HIS NEW POST AS FOR FACT HE IS LEAVING HIS POST AS ADVISER TO KING. THERE ARE CONFLICTING RUMORS AND REPORTS AS TO WHY PUIG IS LEAVING KING'S SERVICE, WHICH INCLUDE: (A) THAT THE KING WAS DISSATISFIED WITH PUIG'S PERFORMANCE; (B) THAT PUIG, KNOWN FOR HIS LIBERAL VIEWS, MAY HAVE BEEN FORCED OUT BECAUSE OF PRESSURE FROM VARIOUS CONSERVATIVE ADVISERS IN KING'S ENTOURAGE; AND (C) THAT PUIG DESIRED A TRANSFER FOR OTHER REASONS. SECOND APPOINTMENT IS OF DIRECT INTEREST FOR US-SPANISH AFFAIRS AND INVOLVES THE DESIGNATION OF JUAN DURAN-LORIGA RODRIGUEZ AS MFA DIRECTOR GENERAL

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FOR NORTH AMERICAN AND FAR EASTERN AFFAIRS. IN THIS CAPACITY HE WILL REPLACE MARQUES DE PERINAT, WHO HAS BEEN LARGEMLY RESPONSIBLE FOR US-SPANISH RELATIONS AT MFA FOR MANY YEARS AND WHO PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN BOTH 1968-70 AND 1975-76 US-SPANISH BASE NEGOTIATIONS. PERINAT TOLD CHARGE THAT HE IS SORRY TO BE LEAVING HIS POST WHICH INVOLVED HIM SO CLOSELY FOR SO LONG WITH US AFFAIRS, BUT THAT A GOOD ASSIGNMENT IS IN THE OFFING. PERINAT ALSO STRESSED THAT

DURAN-LORIGA, WHO HAS MOST RECENTLY SERVED AS SPANISH
AMBASSADOR TO EQUATORIAL GUINEA AND THEN TO JORDAN, AND
WHO HAS ALSO SERVED IN WASHINGTON, IS, IN HIS VIEW, AN
EXCELLENT REPLACEMENT.

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